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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1543
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RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE 4844
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MANAGUA 002366

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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN, CA/OCS, WHA/FO
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USAID/W AND USAID/OFDA
SOUTHCOM PLEASE PASS TO JTF BRAVO
NSC FOR ALVARADO

E.O. 12958; N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [MASS](#) [AEMR](#) [KPAO](#) [NU](#)

SUBJECT: MANAGUA SITREP 1 AND COM DISASTER DECLARATION MESSAGE

¶1. (U) This cable includes a COM disaster declaration. The US Ambassador to Nicaragua requests authority for \$50,000 for immediate disaster response. Funds will be programmed with local partners to meet the most urgent needs. Programming details will follow. See Para 7

¶2. (U) Summary: A low pressure system stalled over the Yucatan peninsula around the 9th of October, setting up a weather pattern that has continued to drop rain in many parts of Central America. The northern Pacific coast of Nicaragua has been especially hard hit by that phenomenon and the subsequent weather patterns have continued to produce precipitation in that area of the country. The areas of Chinandega and Leon have been particularly affected, with thousands of families being evacuated to escape the threat from flooding or possible landslides from the areas near the Telica and San Cristobal volcanoes. President Ortega appeared on local television from Matagalpa discussing the problems on 18 October, ¶2007. On October 19, 2007, the first lady read a disaster declaration for the entire country on television asking for international assistance.

¶3. (U) On 14 October, the La Prensa newspaper reported that President Ortega declared a red alert for the Department of Chinandega on the basis of floods that in the area. The official report from Civil Defense for Chinandega lists 4,210 people affected, 2048 evacuated, 19 shelters operating, and more than 533 kilometers of roads infrastructure damaged by the flood waters. The crop for the 3rd growing season was destroyed for many families, prompting widespread concerns about food security for the affected area. All except 3 of Chinandega's shelters were deactivated when the alert level was reduced from red to green yesterday. This change was announced at a meeting in Chinandega between the local and national officials. Local leaders disagreed with this decision

¶4. (U) The runoff effects from the mountains in the north have continued to put pressure on rivers and tributaries causing many to overflow there banks. At about 1030 p.m. on the evening of 17 October, the Rio Grande River went over its banks in the city of Matagalpa, reportedly flooding additional homes, affecting another 1,710 persons and causing local officials to open 14 more shelters. Additionally, 5 people were reported to have died, and another 2 disappeared. Infrastructure- 270 homes affected, (250 of those semi-destroyed) 250 km of road and 6 bridges affected These numbers are reflected in Civil Defense preliminary report (3rd special part, dated 18 Oct.) Numbers in the national press are dramatically

higher.

¶5. (U) During a press conference at 1:30 p.m. today, First Lady Rosario Ortega read a statement that declared a disaster on behalf of the government. In that request the government asked for international assistance. From observations in the field by NGO partners and international organizations, assistance beyond what the government is able to provide to the people affected is necessary. This assessment is corroborated by a USAID/OFDA Consultant on the ground in the affected area.

¶6. (U) It is the Ambassador's view that;

- The disaster is beyond Nicaragua's ability to respond
- Nicaragua will accept USG assistance
- It is in the interest of the USG to provide assistance.

¶7. (U) The Mission continues to assess needs as more information in coming in from local partners and government officials. Preliminary priority needs include local procurement of emergency relief items including food, clean water, and the sanitary supplies.

Potential partners include Catholic Relief Services, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Project Concern International, or Save the Children Foundation among others.

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